

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A method for providing a figure of merit indicating a value for a member node of a partitioned network cluster to continue operating, the method comprising: querying, by a management program, an application program executing on the partitioned network cluster for the figure of merit; determining, by the application program, the figure of merit; and returning the figure of merit from the application program to the management program.
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2. The method of Claim 1 wherein determining the figure of merit includes: assessing merit criteria for the member node.
3. The method of Claim 2 wherein assessing merit criteria includes: determining a number of users executing the application program from the member node.
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4. The method of Claim 2 wherein assessing merit criteria includes: determining an execution priority of the application program.
5. The method of Claim 1 wherein querying the application program includes: providing a proposed figure of merit.
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6. The method of Claim 5 wherein determining the figure of merit includes: selecting between the proposed figure of merit and determining an alternate figure of merit derived by assessing merit criteria for the member node.

7. A method for resolving a partitioned computer network cluster including multiple cluster partitions, the method comprising:
- evaluating a partition figure of merit for each cluster partition including:
    - requesting, from an application program executing on the cluster partition, a node figure of merit, indicating a value to the application program for a member node, on which the application is executing, to continue operation;
    - providing, from the application program, the requested node figure of merit; and
    - evaluating the provided node figure of merit to determine the partition figure of merit;
    - selecting, in response to the partition figure of merit, a cluster partition to operate as the network cluster; and
    - halting operation of the remaining cluster partitions.
8. The method of Claim 1 wherein requesting a node figure of merit further includes:
- providing, from a cluster manager executing on the member node, a proposed node figure of merit.
9. The method of Claim 8 wherein providing the requested node figure of merit includes:
- selecting between the proposed node figure of merit and determining an alternate figure of merit derived by assessing merit criteria for the member node.
10. The method of Claim 9 wherein assessing merit criteria includes:
- determining a number of users executing the application program from the member node.

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